

# Position Statement Global Midwifery



THE ROYAL  
COLLEGE OF  
MIDWIVES

Promoting • Supporting • Influencing

# Background



**Educated, trained and regulated midwives have been identified as having a positive impact on maternal and perinatal health. Midwifery is a vital solution to the challenges of providing high quality maternal and newborn care for all women and newborn infants in all countries.**

Every year there are an estimated 139 million births and 289,000 women will die during pregnancy, childbirth or soon after. In addition 2.6 million women will suffer stillbirth and 2.9 million infants will die in the first month of life (Renfrew et al 2014).

Midwives are the key healthcare professionals in the global mission to reduce inequalities and promote development. In the last 5 years of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), addressing gender inequalities was identified as the key to achieving all 8 MDGs (World Bank). The midwifery workforce, within a supportive health system, can support women and girls to prevent unwanted pregnancies, provide assistance throughout pregnancy and childbirth, and save the lives of babies born too early (Ban Ki-moon 2014). The needs of women and newborns remain deeply embedded in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals that will guide the future development agenda.

# Position Statement

## Global Midwifery

# RCM position

The Royal College of Midwives (RCM) is recognised as a respected authority in the field of midwifery. As one of the oldest midwifery associations in the world, the RCM is the voice for midwives in the United Kingdom (UK). The RCM acknowledges that the practice of midwifery in the UK does not exist in isolation. Many of our members are actively engaged in global midwifery and our expertise should support the development of the profession of midwifery globally to ensure sustainable development for all.

The RCM recognises that our unique selling point and expertise lie in the success of being a professional association representing midwives and advocating for midwifery.

Therefore, the RCM will contribute to the development of global midwifery in the following ways.

1. **Advocacy**
  - Providing a UK midwifery voice in inter-agency collaboration on international midwifery with United Nations (UN) agencies, Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's), civil society and advocacy organisations.
  - Joint advocacy work with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to raise the status of midwives and the profession globally.
  - Advising and lobbying the UK Government in global midwifery, to support the implementation of their global health policy.
2. **Representation**

Member representation and activities in global and European organisations and board membership of four organisations:

  - International Confederation of Midwives (ICM)
  - European Midwives Association (EMA)
  - International Board of Lactation Consultants (IBLCE)
  - European Forum of Nursing and Midwifery Association (EFNNMA)
3. **Technical expertise and capacity building**
  - Advising the World Health Organisation (WHO) midwifery collaborating centre at Cardiff as a partner.
  - Partnering with Midwifery Associations through the ICM's mechanism of twinning to engage in funded capacity building activities.
  - Providing funded technical expertise to inter-professional partnerships.
  - Providing funded technical expertise to capacity building projects addressing the four ICM pillars of midwifery: Education, Regulation, Competencies and Association.
  - Providing expertise and networks to support work on global challenges such as quality improvement, safety, evidence-based practice, leadership development, midwifery research and advocacy.
4. **Consultancy**
  - Responding to enquiries from midwifery associations regarding support in education and / or practice development.
  - Facilitation of a range of international exchanges and study visits from individuals, organisations and government officials.
  - Accreditation of international learning programmes that involve midwives.
5. **Supporting our members**

The RCM recognise that engaging with our members around global midwifery leads to increasing engagement and activism within the wider organisation and produces RCM advocates. We support two categories of members.

  - a. UK members – providing advice, supporting our members engaging in global midwifery and providing them with opportunities to undertake global midwifery work where such opportunities exist.
  - b. International members – providing them with educational resources to support knowledge sharing and supporting them to implement safe maternity care in their own contexts.

# References

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